

# CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by

THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

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No. 62

November 23rd, 1960.

## Missionary Councils and Coloured Students in the Northern Countries.

The Northern Missionary Council, meeting in Oslo, has appealed to the Missionary Councils in the various Northern countries to do something for the coloured students arriving here in increasing numbers for advanced training.

At the meeting it was learnt that the Soviet Union is planning the erection of a new university to accommodate 9,000 coloured, 5,000 European and 5,000 Russian undergraduates. A very great number of young people from the developing countries are undergoing training in the U.S.A., England, France and Germany, while language difficulties so far have kept the number of coloured students in the Northern countries at a few hundred, but this number may be expected to go up in the future.

The Northern Missionary Council finds it natural for the missionary organizations to do something for these people and, consequently, has asked the national missionary councils individually to consider this matter, possibly in co-operation with the Christian students' organizations. It might be a good idea, for instance, to erect hostels where coloured and Northern students might live together, or for Christian homes to open their doors to foreign students. 65 o/o of the coloured men and women going to America and Europe in pursuit of further training are Christians.

## DENMARK

### Rev. Westergaard Madsen Bishop of Copenhagen.

Rev. W. Westergaard Madsen has been appointed Bishop of Copenhagen. The result of the ballot for the future Bishop of Copenhagen was as follows: Rev. W. Westergaard Madsen, Copenhagen, obtained 586 votes; Rev. Haldor Hald 383 votes; Rev. Jacob Joensen Faroe Isles, 232 votes; Rev. Dr. Svend Lerfeldt, Copenhagen, 185 votes; and Mr. Otto Krabbe, Copenhagen, 109 votes.

Rev. W. Westergaard Madsen is 53 years old and held a living in Copenhagen for a number of years until he was appointed Secretary General of the philanthropic organization "Samvirkende Menighedsplejer" in Copenhagen in 1942. He is President of the Joint Committee of the Lutheran National Church Organizations, Vice President of the Inter-Church Aid Organization and has occupied a number of other ecclesiastical positions of trust.



Rev. Leer Andersen Bishop of Elsinore.

Rev. J.B. Leer Andersen, Elsinore, has been appointed Bishop of the newly established Diocese of Elsinore. At the election by the parish councils in the Diocese he obtained 625 votes while Rev. N.J. Rald, Rural Dean, Copenhagen, had 556, and Rev. Svend Aage Nielsen, Rural Dean, Haslev, 170 votes. The new Bishop, who is 50 years old, was Secretary General of the Copenhagen Church Foundation for a number of years.

In answer to attacks on Rev. Leer Andersen for having signed a declaration in 1946, opposing the ordination of women, he has stated that already many years ago he changed his views in this matter and that he is now willing to ordain women.

St. Olai Church at Elsinore is to be the cathedral of the new diocese, but the Bishop is to have his residence and offices at Hellerup, a suburb of Copenhagen.

Proposal for Church Diakonia Committee.

In an article in the "Korshærbladet" Rev. Haldor Hald, Chief of the Church Army in Denmark, proposes the establishment of a diakonia committee under the Lutheran National Church, perhaps even one in each diocese. Such a committee should not supervise the work of the various welfare institutions or find the means for their activities, but should follow developments, examine views of principle and make them known in the right quarters. Mr. Hald feels that diakonia endeavours might thus become recognized as an integral part of the Church entirety, and that such a committee would ensure greater confidence in the work on the part of the many persons actively engaged in the social and spiritual services of the Church.

A number of years ago a similar, but more detailed, proposal was advanced in the annual report of the Copenhagen "Samvirkende Menighedsplejer" (Co-operation of congregational social works) and the idea has now been taken up once more in the organ of the "Congregational Social Works". So far an unofficial diakonia committee under the Joint Committee of the Lutheran National Church Organizations has made it possible for representatives of the diakonia organizations to inform one another occasionally of their activities.

"The Word and Israel" on the Exceptional Position of Jews.

The remark by Rev. Paul Borchsenius that he was convinced that there are two approaches to God, one for Jews and one for Christians (see CN No. 60), has caused the leaders of the movement "The Word and Israel" to publish a statement in which it says:

"On the basis of the word of God we know of no other way of salvation for any person or any nation but by conversion to faith in Jesus Christ who said, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me'. But precisely on this basis we realize that Israel, being a 'peculiar people unto God', occupies a place apart in God's plan of salvation for which reason we cannot approach or treat this people on the same lines as all other nations."

From a lengthy statement by the President, supported by the Board of Management, it appears that the hesitation of a Jewish convert to "let himself be baptized into a Church which for nearly 2,000 years has been the arch-enemy of his people and which in its doctrine leaves no room for Israel's great hope of the future" is fully appreciated. "The natural thing for him must be to let himself be baptized by a Christian Jew, thus clearly acknowledging and maintaining his Jewish nationality".

Rev. Leer Andersen Bishop of Elsinore.

Rev. J.B. Leer Andersen, Bishop of Elsinore, has been appointed Bishop of the newly established Diocese of Elsinore. At the election by the parish council in the Diocese he obtained 255 votes while Rev. N.J. Hald, Rural Dean, Copenhagen, had 252, and Rev. Svend Aage Nielsen, Rural Dean, Halslev, 170 votes. The new Bishop, who is 50 years old, was Secretary General of the Copenhagen Church Foundation for a number of years. In answer to attacks on Rev. Leer Andersen for having signed a declaration in 1946, opposing the ordination of women, he has stated that already many years ago he changed his views in this matter and that he is now willing to ordain women.

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### The Koran Published in Danish.

This month, for the first time in history, the Koran has been published in Danish, the translation having been done by a Danish school teacher who himself is a Moslem. Until now the few Moslems in Denmark have used an English translation of the Koran.

## FINLAND

### Three Christian Labour Unions Join in With One Another.

In Finland there are three different Christian labour organizations, but at a meeting last month a joint committee was set up for the purpose of co-ordinating their activities. The organizations in question are the Christian Workers' Union of Finland, which is especially engaged in revivalist and evangelization work; the Union of Christian Labour Youth; and the Union of Christian Social-Democrats, which is particularly concerned with social matters from a Christian point of view. The organizations are to carry on in their particular spheres of activity, but will be in touch with one another through the newly established committee which will be in contact with similar organizations in foreign countries as well.

### TV-transmissions from Temporary Church Hall of Divine Services.

For a number of Sundays the "Teesvisio" - the private television station in Helsinki (Helsingfors) - has been transmitting devotional services from the House of the Association of Engineers. The services take place in a room temporarily equipped as a chapel with altar, crucifix and pulpit. The services are arranged in turn by various congregations in the Capital, which have lent their preachers, organists, church choirs and 40-50 members of the congregations for the purpose. The plan is to ask also congregations outside of Helsinki (Helsingfors) to take part in the programmes.

### Church and Theatre under Debate.

Last month the Finnish Clergymen's Brother Circle in Helsinki (Helsingfors) invited people in the Capital connected with the stage to a debate on "Church and Theatre". Head of the Finnish National Theatre, Professor Arvi Kivinaa, emphasized in his opening address that the task of the theatre as such is not to propagate anything, but to expose the soul of a play with all its good and bad qualities. He mentioned, however, a number of plays which by their very nature have the effect of bringing a message to the spectator, sometimes even a clearly Christian message. The Professor said that he believed the Church and the stage would, as before, come to work side by side also in our time.

The second speaker of the evening, Dr. T.P. Virkkunen, felt that the Church had something to learn from the theatre with regard to the question how to bring a message home to the audience in an unsentimental and realistic manner. Christian preaching must bring the Word into everyday life and, like the stage, give a true image of human life.

Bishop Martti Simojoki, Helsinki (Helsingfors), warned against placing Church and theatre in opposition to each other and stressed the point that the Church may learn from the stage to respect life and man and to be concerned with human life stories.

The Keren Published in Danish

This month, for the first time in history, the Keren has been published in Danish. The translation having been done by a Danish school teacher who himself is a Kerenist. Until now the few Kerenists in Denmark have used an English translation of the Keren.

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TV-Transmission from Tampere Church Hall of Divine Services

For a number of Sundays the "Kerava" - the private television station in Helsinki (Helsingfors) - has been transmitting devotional services from the House of the Association of Evangelists. The services take place in a room temporarily equipped as a chapel within the complex and built by the Association. The services are arranged in turn by various congregations in the district, which have lent their preachers, organists, church choirs and 40-50 members of the congregation for the purpose. The purpose is to make the congregation outside of Helsinki (Helsingfors) to take part in the programmes.

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News in Brief:

- The Finnish Missionary Society has set up a committee to examine the possibilities for inviting holders of scholarships from the Society's mission field in Africa to study in either Finland or other countries.
- The American revivalist preacher Billy Graham will visit Helsinki (Helsingfors) from 2nd - 9th July, 1961. Among those inviting him is Bishop Martti Simojoki, Helsinki (Helsingfors).
- The Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland and the People's Bible Society have opened a joint work centre in Helsinki (Helsingfors).
- On the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Board the Government has approved the establishment of three new congregations in Helsinki (Helsingfors), which are to be called the congregations of Matthew, Mark and Luke.
- The annual national Church collection for social purposes, known as "Common Responsibility" this year amounted to 65 million Finnish marks or 5 million more than last year. There were 1,000 more collectors and 25,000 more contributors than last year.
- Professor Yrjö J.E. Alanen, Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion, has died, 72 years of age.

NORWAY

Norwegian Missionary Council in Danger of Disruption.

The Norwegian Missionary Council is threatened with disruption on the matter of its relation to the World Council of Churches. At the final ballot of the Missionary Council one representative, of the Methodist Church, was in favour of membership of the new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism planned to be established after the integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council at New Delhi next year, while 19 representatives voted against. But at a subsequent test ballot on consultative membership of the Commission there were 11 votes in favour and 9 against. A number of missionary organizations and Churches were not represented at the meeting, but all member organizations have now been requested by letter to discuss the matter of consultative membership before the final decision is made on February 14th, 1961.

In an article the President of the Missionary Council, Mr. Tormod Vågen, who is Secretary General of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, has announced that he will resign from the Norwegian Missionary Council if a majority should persist in their wish for consultative membership of the Commission and adds that, in that case, he envisages the possibility of a disruption of the Council. On several occasions Mr. Tormod Vågen has expressed deep mistrust of the World Council of Churches.

The Secretary General of the Norwegian Missionary Society, Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, who has since been appointed Bishop of Stavanger, was among those advocating consultative membership. In an article Bishop Birkeli has accounted for his views, emphasizing the importance of not severing international missionary connections.

In another article the Rector of the Practical Theological Seminary of the Free Theological Faculty, Dr. Carl Fr. Wisløff, writes that Norwegian foreign missions will not come to stand alone even if they would withdraw from all connections with the World Council of Churches. Among

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other things, he points out that 17,000 of the missionaries from the U.S.A. and 26,000 from Canada, have been sent out by Churches outside the ecumenical co-operation. Furthermore, he expects new international organs to develop which will be easier for evangelical Christians to join.

#### Dr. Visser 't Hooft in Oslo.

Last month the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, visited Oslo where he delivered an address at the general assembly of the Norwegian Clergymen's Association. In an interview with the Christian daily paper "Vårt Land" the Secretary General says that no member Church has ever suggested that the Scriptures alone should constitute the basis of talks in the ecumenical orbit, as it is now demanded by Dr. Carl Fr. Wisløff (see CN No. 60). He emphasizes, however, that the Scriptures do, as a matter of fact, constitute the foundation of the ecumenical co-operation as may be seen from the study material for the Assembly at New Delhi which consists predominantly of Bible studies.

In his address Dr. Visser 't Hooft stressed the point that the unity which the Churches are striving after, is the unity of the New Testament. It is a matter, not of uniformity or of an organized super church, but of a deep spiritual fellowship, koinonia. But the unity proclaimed by the Bible is not limited to an invisible and mystical unity.

#### Bishop Birkeli's Appointment a Historical Church Event.

In a leading article in the Norwegian Christian daily paper "Dagen", published in Bergen, the appointment of Secretary General Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli as Bishop of Stavanger is called a historical church event. So far he has been the Secretary General of the Norwegian Missionary Society and is the first "organization minister" to become bishop without having first served as a minister in the Lutheran National Church.

The paper describes him as the "missionary bishop" and feels that in this capacity he may eventually compete with the Bishop of Oslo for the rank of "Foreign Secretary of the Church", the paper not wanting to hint, however, that this might lead to any particular changes in the ecumenical course of the Church.

Bishop Fr. Birkeli does not entertain the same misgivings of principle with regard to the World Council of Churches as do a number of other Norwegian churchmen, but he is opposed to the coming integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

#### The Norwegian Bishops on Nuclear Re-Armament.

At the end of October the Bishops of the Norwegian Lutheran National Church published a statement in which they appeal for the discontinuation of nuclear re-armaments. They point to the heavy responsibility of the political leaders when confronted with farreaching decisions. Towards the end of the statement it says:

"The Church as such cannot propound any particular views in any given political situation. Here the conscience of each individual must be decisive. In the same way some of the Bishops feel obliged to declare, that, according to their fundamental Christian conceptions, they must oppose the establishment of nuclear bases in our country, while others cannot take this stand. The Bishops' Council thus reflects the same diverging views as may be found among all Christian men and women."

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The Church will go on protesting against war as an undignified means of settling controversies among the nations. She will continue to appeal for the cessation of nuclear re-armaments and for the safeguarding of peace through adequate international control. She prays that God in His mercy will avert a nuclear war."

At the meeting the Bishops moreover adopted a proposal for including a prayer for co-operation among the nations as a new section of the established church prayer.

#### New Legislation on Abortion in Norway.

Last month a new Act on Abortion was passed in Norway, extending the present possibilities for legally induced abortion. After a reading in the "Odelsting" lasting for 11 hours the Bill was passed with 61 votes against 34, and the various sections were passed unamended by the "Lagtinget".

The crucial matter of issue has been the justification of induced abortion on social grounds, and the section dealing with the consideration of social circumstances was given a less sweeping formulation than the one suggested at one time by the Penal Code Commission. Induced abortion may now be permitted in cases "where it is necessary in order to protect the life and health of the woman against serious danger. In evaluating such danger any special disposition of the woman with regard to physical or psychical diseases should be considered as well as her living conditions and other circumstances likely to make her ill or contribute to give her a physical or psychical breakdown."

The Christian Liberal Party has protested against thus smuggling in the legalization of induced abortion on social grounds.

The Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" describes the contents of the Act as a "legalized slide", but points out that the practical application of the law is placed in the hands of the Norwegian physicians and that it is now up to them, their conceptions of life, and their sense of responsibility what the effect of the Act is going to be.

#### Proposal for Fewer Holy Days.

The Industrial Union of Norway and the Norwegian Employers' Union have requested the Ministry of Labour to reduce the number of holy days in order to increase production, referring to the fact that the number of days off is greater in Norway than in most other countries, and to the weekly reduction of three working hours which was introduced last year and is equal to a three weeks' holiday per year.

The request does not give any definite suggestions as to which holy days might be abolished, but mentions several possibilities.

#### News in Brief:

- The Bishops of the Norwegian Lutheran National Church have resolved to set up a committee, consisting of theologians, physicians and educationalists, to analyze the views of the Church on sexual-ethical matters.

- This year the Norwegian Christian Study Council has organized 2,028 study circles with 17,200 members, which is 550 more study circles than last year. 1,250 groups have studied the Bible.

- According to a recently published survey the Norwegian Sunday schools have been attended by some 265,000 children every Sunday in 4,400 Sunday schools with 14,700 teachers. More than 150,000 young people take part in the activities of the Christian youth organizations.



On the occasion of the recent golden jubilee of the Norwegian Clergymen's Temperance Society it was learnt that 62 o/o of the congregations in Norway use non-alcoholic wine at Holy Communion.

## SWEDEN

### Swedish Foreign Missions in 1959.

On the request by the Swedish Missionary Council the Swedish Institute for Mission Research has drawn up a statistics on Swedish Foreign missions in 1959. According to this 1,541 Swedish missionaries were on active service as against 1,585 in 1958. 542 of the 1,541 missionaries were men and 999 women. The total income of the missionary societies amounted to almost 22 million Swedish crowns which is roughly 2 million more than in 1958. There are 5,162 native ministers on the mission fields and 6,403 other male co-workers as well as 3,683 Bible women.

### Mission Covenant Church Erects 65 New Churches in 5 Years.

In the course of the five year period from 1955 to 1960 the largest of the Free Churches in Sweden, the Mission Covenant Church, has erected 65 new church buildings. Besides this 290 extensive restorations, including localities for youth activities, have been carried out. The total expenditure has amounted to roughly 40 million Swedish crowns.

These figures are taken from a statistical report published last month. At the same time the church building programme is shown to have taken a rising curve from the first to the second half of the 1950's.

### More Free Church Members of Parliament.

More Free Church members were elected Members of Parliament at the Swedish general election in the autumn. Among the new Members is one of the most prominent men in the Methodist Church, Mr. Thorvald Källstad, who is a graduate of divinity and an instructor at the Methodist Theological School in Gothenburg. He was returned by the Swedish Liberal Party, as were also Mr. Augustinus Reijer, one of the leaders of the Publishing House of the Mission Covenant Church, and the President of the Örebro Mission, Mr. Matteus Berglund. Among the other Free Church Members are the farmer Mr. David Gomer, of the Baptist Church, who was returned by the Centre Party and the Mission Covenant member, Mr. Richard Bergström, who is a Social-Democrat.

### Former Missionary Re-Visits China.

On the invitation by the Chinese Church the former Swedish missionary Mrs. Ester Nyström, who worked in China from 1924 until the Communists took over, has left for China in order to visit the congregations there.

Mrs. Nyström was married to the late missionary in China Gustav Nyström who died three years ago. Mr. Nyström acted as interpreter to Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld during the latter's visit to Peking. On this occasion the then Foreign Minister of China, Mr. Chou-En-Lai, invited Mr. Nyström to return to China together with his wife, but this visit never came off. About a year later Mr. Nyström, however, went on an evangelization tour to a number of Chinese congregations.

### Representative of Constantinople Visits Archbishop of Sweden.

Bishop Emilianos of Meloa, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to the World Council of Churches, recently paid a few days' visit to the Swedish Archbishop, Dr. Gunnar Hultgren, at Uppsala. The visit was of a semi-official nature.



The Orthodox guest stressed the wish of the Patriarchate for a more intimate contact with the Swedish Lutheran National Church and renewed an earlier invitation to the Archbishop to visit the Patriarch whenever convenient.

### Bishop of Lund in Favour of Women Ministers.

In a pastoral letter to clergymen and parish council members in his diocese the new Bishop of Lund, Bishop Martin Lindström, has declared himself in definite favour of women ministers. The Bishop writes:

"I have all due respect for those who have felt compelled to say no to women pastors. I take their attitude to be a sign of true concern for Bible and Confession, a concern which I fully share with them. However, I have come to the conviction that this very Bible and Confession demand the exact opposite attitude from us, a clear yes."

Explaining his standpoint the Bishop says that the New Testament, from a religious point of view, places man and women on a completely equal footing and that, consequently, it is a disparagement of woman to deny her the possibility of taking orders. "If the ecclesiastical office had been instituted on a par with the Eucharist and Baptism we should have had to accept, without further questioning, the tradition that it was only for men, but such a conception of the ecclesiastical office is foreign to both the New Testament and our Confession", the Bishop writes.

At a meeting in Hälsingborg, Bishop Bo Giertz, Gothenburg, who is the leader of the movement "Kyrklig Samling", referred to Bishop Lindström's pastoral letter and said that a no to women ministers is based on the words of Jesus and on the conviction that his commandments are valid at all times, and that his Apostles did not make a mistake when they decided on an order for all the Christian congregations which they knew was based on God's will.

### Conference of Contact with Big Organizations of Interests.

A conference of contact among representatives of the Lutheran National Church and some of the leaders of the big organizations of interests, the Labour Union Movement, the Swedish Central Organization of Salaried Employees and the National Swedish Farmers' Union was arranged at Sänga-Säby by the social-ethical delegation of the Home Mission Board of Sweden. This was the first time such a conference took place and it was very successful. The discussions dealt with, among other things, the responsibility of the organizations of interests for people within and without these organizations, how to organize co-operation between them and the Church, and the matter of new working possibilities of the Church.

The Confessional Front (Kyrklig Samling) has protested against this venture, accusing the Home Mission Board of aiming at a "church of conformity" into which all ethical and religious interests in the nation might be gathered. In this connection one of the prominent men of "Kyrklig Samling" Dean G.A. Danell, Växjö, writes:

"Has not co-operation with all sorts of secular organizations already done sufficient harm to the Church in our country? Are they to be invited to exert even greater influence in Church matters? Does not the Apostle say, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers'?"

The Orthodox guest expressed the view of the Eastern Orthodox Church in a more intimate contact with the Swedish Lutheran Ministry and received an earlier invitation to the Archbishop to visit the Lutheran wherever convenient.

Archbishop of Lund in Favour of Women Ministers

In a pastoral letter to the Swedish and Danish church members in his diocese the new Bishop of Lund, Bishop Martin Lundström, has declared himself in definite favour of women ministers. The Bishop writes:

"I have all too frequently for those who have felt repelled to say no to women pastors. I take their attitude to be a sign of true concern for Bible and Confession, a concern which I fully share with them. However, I have come to the conviction that this very Bible and Confession demand the exact opposite attitude from us, a clear yes."

Explaining his standpoint the Bishop says that the New Testament from a religious point of view, places men and women on a completely equal footing and that, consequently, it is a discrimination of women to deny her the possibility of taking orders. "If the ecclesiastical office had been instituted on a par with the Eucharist and Baptism we should have had to accept, without further questioning, the tradition that it was only for men, but such a conception of the ecclesiastical office is foreign to both the New Testament and our Confession," the Bishop writes.

At a meeting in Helsingborg, Bishop Bo-Gösta Getherberg, who is the leader of the movement "För ett jämställt kyrkans liv" (For an equal church life), referred to Bishop Lundström's pastoral letter and said that a no to women ministers is based on the words of Jesus and on the conviction that his commands are valid at all times, and that his Apostles did not make a mistake when they decided on an order for all the Christian congregations which they knew was based on God's will.

Conference of Contact with the Organisation of Interests

A conference of contact among representatives of the Lutheran Church, Church and some of the leaders of the big organisations of interests, Labour Union Movement, the Swedish Central Organisation of Salaries Employees and the National Swedish Farmers' Union was arranged at Skövde by the social-ethical delegation of the Home Mission Board of Sweden. This was the first time such a conference took place and it was very successful. The discussion dealt with, among other things, the responsibility of the organisations of interests for people within and without these organisations, how to organise co-operation between them and the Church, and the matter of new working possibilities of the Church.

The Conference (För ett jämställt kyrkans liv) has protested against this venture, according to the Home Mission Board of aiming at a "church of conformity" into which all ethical and religious interests in the nation might be gathered. In this connection one of the prominent men of the "För ett jämställt kyrkans liv" movement, Hans C.A. Godel, (Folkets, writer:

"Has not co-operation with all sorts of secular organisations which have sufficient harm to the Church in our country? Are they to be invited to exert even greater influence in Church matters? Does not the Apostle say, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers'?"

News in Brief:

- The Swedish Mission Covenant Church is planning a co-ordination of its work in the city of Stockholm so that three congregations are united into one, centred around a new church. The reason is the ever decreasing number of inhabitants in the city proper to the advantage of the suburbs.
- On a request by the Archbishop the Swedish Government Department of Church Affairs has set up a committee to examine the question of the position and work of the Church in case of war.
- A Northern Christian Hotel Conference has been held at Rättvik, Sweden. Here the erection of a hotel under Christian management in Israel was discussed, and a committee was set up to carry on the investigations and possibly bring forward a concrete suggestion at next year's conference.
- Some 400,000 children, or roughly one third of all the Swedish children, attend Sunday School, the secretary of the Swedish Sunday School Council, Mr. John Sjögren, said in connection with a nationwide campaign last month for the Sunday School.

